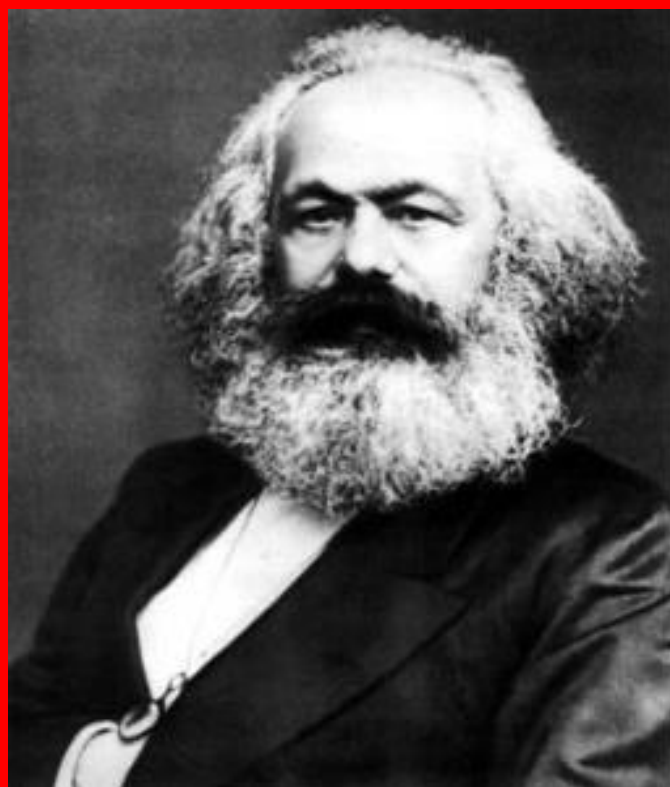


Worker Communism

Radical Conscience of the Left of Capital

(Part 10)



In defense of Marxism

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Issues of the text

Issues of part X (this part):

- Worker communism and the acquisition of political power
- Worker communism and the ideology of the personalities
- Worker communism and relations with foreign governments

Issues of part IX:

- Background to the faction of worker communism
- What is worker communism?
- Worker communism and workers' dilemma

Issues of part VIII:

- The Place of Worker-communism in History
- Worker-communism and the Communist Left
- Worker communism and Trade Unions
- Worker-communism and the National Question
- Worker communism and Independence for Kurdistan
- Worker-communism and Parliamentarism
- Worker-communism and Democracy

Issues of part VII:

- Worker-communism and Stalinism
- Worker-communism and Maoism
- Worker-communism and the transition state
- Worker-communism and socialism in one country
- Socialism or state capitalism

Issues of part VI:

- Rebuilding the Third Line Under the Title of Revolutionary Marxism
- The formation of the only communist party of the world
- Bundism and the special rights of Komala
- Marxism or narcissism

Issues of part V:

- War and the Unity of Communist Militants
- The era of imperialist wars and the era of communist revolutions
- The left of capital perspective on the reasons for the formation of the imperialist war between Iran and Iraq
- Turning workers into cannon fodder on the battlefield of war to defend the imperialist war
- Vote for war credits
- The bankruptcy of the Unity of Communist Militants
- Worker-communism and other wars
- The Unity of Communist Militants and the coup

Issues of part IV:

- The Economic Theories of the UCM
- The Marxist concept of super-profits
- The value of labour power and the Unity of Communist Militants
- Absolute ground rent and differential rent
- The Marxist concept of capital accumulation
- The minimum programme of the UCM

Issues of part III:

- The 1979 Revolution in Iran from the Perspective of the Unity of Communist Militants
- The Marxist conception of social revolution
- The democratic revolution from the perspective of the Unity of Communist Militants
- Retaking the democratic revolution
- Stealing the work of others

Issues of part II:

- Changing the name of «Sahand» to the «Unity of Communist Militants»
- The Marxist-Leninist ideology of the «Unity of Communist Militants»
- The country of the «Unity of Communist Militants»
- «Unity of Communist Militants» and the Iranian “communist” movement
- «Unity of Communist Militants» and the theocratic faction of the bourgeoisie

Issues of part I:

- Introduction
- Azarakhsh (“Lightning”)
- Sahand: sympathizer of the Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause
- Current three and Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause (Arman)
- Sahand and the Anti-Imperialist Struggle
- The petty bourgeois Khomeini

Worker communism and the acquisition of political power

Throughout human history, the exploiting class has always come to power to reorganize and direct class exploitation. At the same time, the exploitative classes gradually grew within society, becoming economically powerful and, in the process, the political superstructure of society changed. The exploited never had and could not have access to an alternative to the system that exploited them. Only one social class has existed in the history of mankind which, given its material conditions, has been able to present an alternative to the system that exploits it, namely, the proletariat and the communist system. For the first time in human history, the exploited class has been able to gain political power without becoming the dominant economic class, in turn leading to the collapse of the state.

Before continuing the discussion, it is necessary to explain that, within the labour movement, the idea that a small minority of the working class will gain power instead of the whole working class is referred to as a deviation known as Blanquism. As the revolution is the historical function of the working class, it is the class that is trying to gain political power, but not by some coup d'état - this is an insult to the working class. If a small section of the working class attempted this, it would lead to individual dictatorship, not total dictatorship. Engels explains this:

“From Blanqui's assumption, that any revolution may be made by the outbreak of a small revolutionary minority, follows of itself the necessity of a dictatorship after the success of the venture. This is, of course, a dictatorship, not of the entire revolutionary class, the proletariat, but of the small minority that has made the revolution, and who are themselves previously organized under the dictatorship of one or several individuals.”[1]

From the teachings of Engels, it can be concluded that the victory of the communist revolution cannot lead to a party dictatorship, even that of a revolutionary party, but to the dictatorship of the whole revolutionary class of the proletariat. The working class has gained political power only twice in human history. We will review each of these two very briefly in order to learn from their experiences, and those experiences to occur in the future. Further, we will also show that Mansoor Hekmat's understanding of how worker communism could gain political power is completely alien to the tradition of the labour movement and conforms to the bourgeois tradition.

On the 18th of March, 1871, armed Parisian workers, carrying red flags and crying the slogan “Long live the Commune!” stressed the importance of hoisting the Red Flag over Paris, and claimed “the old world writhed in convulsions of rage at the sight of the Red Flag”. Communards rose up to destroy wage slavery and to set up a new world. Capitalism, in its cradle of civilization, was under the attack of the proletariat. The bourgeois, who until the day before had relied on their God-given powers, were on the run like miserable creatures in their luxurious coaches. After a bloody battle, the Communards heroically pulled down the capitalist system in Paris and began to set up a new system.

The Commune of Paris occurred in a situation where capitalism was still in its period of development, and had not yet entered the period of its decline. In other words, the Commune of Paris occurred in historic conditions where the capitalism was still able to develop its productive forces in a progressive way and the material conditions were not yet ready for world revolution, the proletariat was still in its infancy.

In other words, although the barbarians' 'civilized' brutal massacre of the Communards in the cradle of bourgeois civilization did not lead to their suppression, the Paris Commune was not able to transform the international community into a communist society. However, the ideas and lessons of the Paris Commune are not forgettable and act as a beacon for the future.

With the outbreak of World War I and with the entry of capitalism into its period of decadence, the era of the communist revolution began and the working class is the only class which, through its world revolution, challenges the bourgeois world and, the working class cannot liberate itself unless it liberates the whole of humanity from the sinkhole and dirt of capitalism. The Communist Revolution is not only possible but it is also a vital necessity for the survival of the human race.

With the onset of world revolution between 1917 and 1923, the proletariat was able, for the second time, to gain political power. The bourgeoisie has always asserted that the Bolsheviks seized political power through a coup to muddy the October Revolution. That is to say, it was not carried out by the working class, through workers' councils as part of world revolution, but rather as a coup d'état, secretly conspired to gain political power. Lenin was even accused of Blanquism and anarchist understandings by other political tendencies.

In spite of the bourgeois propaganda, the workers gained political power in Russia publicly and collectively. The February 1917 uprising in Russia led to dual power. On the one hand, the working class organized in the workers' and soldiers' councils wanted to exercise their class power; on the other, the bourgeois class, represented by the interim government and backed by the Mensheviks and the social revolutionaries, were still at work.

Both the Bolsheviks and the working class were ambivalent about the transitional government in the February 1917 developments. The working class had an illusion of Petrograd's labour councils concerning issues such "peace" and "eight hours of daily work". The class struggle led the Bolsheviks and, above all Lenin to conclude that the old Bolshevik programme had become obsolete. Lenin opened up a new horizon for world revolution with his *April Theses*, emphasizing that workers' councils were the political power of the proletariat. At the same time, Lenin stressed that, as long as we are in the minority on the councils, we should criticize and explain the mistakes of the councils to the masses and underline the necessity of transferring all power to the workers' councils. He wrote:

"The masses must be made to see that the Soviets of Workers' Deputies are the only possible form of revolutionary government, and that therefore our task is, as long as this government yields to the influence of the bourgeoisie, to present a patient, systematic, and persistent

explanation of the errors of their tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses.

As long as we are in the minority we carry on the work of criticising and exposing errors and at the same time we preach the necessity of transferring the entire state power to the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, so that the people may overcome their mistakes by experience.”[2]

With Lenin's *April Theses* and with the slogan “All power to the Soviets”, the Bolsheviks played a central role in orientating the working class, and the working class realized that the Bolsheviks were the only party standing with them. The ambassadors of foreign countries witnessed the influence of the Bolsheviks; in particular, the French ambassador wrote in his notes:

“Lenin's influence has increased tremendously in the past few days.” [3]

Factory committees in Petrograd were heavily influenced by the Bolsheviks. The working class gradually came to the conclusion that the Petrograd Council had become an instrument in the hands of the interim government. In July 1917, the bourgeoisie tried to stage an early uprising in Petrograd, before massacring the proletariat and the Bolsheviks. In response to the Duma's proclamation, the proletariat of Petrograd, after arming itself, came up with the slogan, “All power to the Soviets”. The Bolsheviks had already warned the working class of the consequences of early action: when the Bolsheviks confronted an armed demonstration of 500,000 workers, they tried to be at the head of it and say it was a peaceful move, so as not to fall into the trap of the bourgeoisie. The same night, the proletariat realized its early action and, the next day, the working class did not come out at the request of the Bolsheviks. The bourgeoisie did the same in Germany: the early rise of the proletariat in 1919 and 1923 led to the bloody repression of the proletariat and the communists. Particularly, the early uprising of 1919 dealt the greatest blow to world revolution; there was no realization that sheer mental will was an insufficient condition for the victory of the working class. The events of July 1917 exposed the false legend of the coup by the Bolsheviks, echoed by bourgeois ideologues. After the July events, the repression of the working class and the Bolsheviks began, with rumours spread that the Bolsheviks were spies of the Germans. Lenin went into hiding and Trotsky was arrested.

The Russian bourgeoisie resorted to a new trick to suppress the revolution, deliberately surrendering the city of Riga to the Germans to put Petrograd at the forefront of war and under martial law. Consequently, under martial law, it could have been easier to suppress the proletariat.

In September 1917, Kornilov launched a coup to defeat the revolution, which failed. Not only were the French and British military officers on the Russian front unopposed to the coup, but they also hoped that it would restore law and order to the Russian Army. The *London Times* well reflected the positions of the British bourgeoisie, when, on 8 September 1917, it published the following:

“Must put an end to committees and debates, to shameful councils of unrestrained workers and soldiers. Must put an end to their talk about utopia.” [4] [Our translation]

The radicalization of the workers and the soldiers indicated that the class consciousness of the workers had greatly increased and this was evident in the large demonstrations and public assemblies. The Bolsheviks’ readiness to take on the necessary tasks and their success in carrying out these tasks were due to the fact that, as a proletarian party, they had real roots and considerable influence in the ranks of progressive workers’ leaders.

As society evolved, a large proportion of workers and soldiers no longer had illusions about the interim government, and this coincided with the increasing influence of the Bolsheviks, especially in the workers’ and soldiers’ councils in Petrograd and Moscow. This paved the way for political power, and the uprising was on the agenda, as Lenin explained:

“There were no objective conditions for the victory of the uprising at that time. The class vanguard of the revolution was not still with us. We still did not have a majority among the workers and soldiers of the two capitals. But now there is such a majority on both councils ... But now the situation is completely different. The majority of the class, which is the vanguard of the revolution and the vanguard of the people, capable of taking the masses with it, is with us.” [5] [Our translation]

Contrary to the bourgeois media gossip that the Bolsheviks seized power through a coup, the decision was taken publicly and collectively by the Soviets in which the Bolsheviks had a leading role. Even the Mensheviks accused the Bolsheviks of setting a date for the revolution, destroying the legend of the coup.

Despite its disagreements regarding the uprising and the stubborn opposition to it from Kamenev and Zinoviev, the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks adopted the agenda of the uprising on 10 October, politically rather than militarily, by a majority. Kamenev and Zinoviev published the process for the preparation of the uprising, as well as the reasons for their opposition, in the *Novaya Zhizn* Menshevik magazine. Lenin demanded that they be expelled from the Central Committee for exposing the uprising in this magazine, which was not approved by the Central Committee.

Importantly, the Bolshevik Central Committee never decided and could not decide on the time and day of the uprising, but it was the Military Revolutionary Committee that carried out the final uprising and attack. On 22 October 1917, the workers and soldiers chanted “All power to the Soviets”. On 23 October, the Revolutionary Military Committee captured the Peter and Paul Fortress and, on October 24, the Central Bank, along with a takeover of the telephone network. On October 25, the Provisional Government’s Winter Palace was occupied. The social revolution is the least dangerous means to change the social system. The number of deaths during the October uprising was negligible. The number of deaths increased after the victory of the revolution and during the onslaught of the White Army and the famine caused by the economic siege and, later on, World War II.

The symmetry of the October uprising with the Second Congress of Councils indicated that the entire working class gained power through the councils. The congress represented different political tendencies, and this was quite natural. With the fall of the Winter Palace, the congress announced the transfer of power to the workers' and soldiers' councils as a result of the revolution.

With a brief review of the two cases of political power gained by the working class in human history, we examine the acquisition of political power from the perspective of worker communism. Mansoor Hekmat first declared that his party was in favour of political power and wanted to gain political power. So far, no problem: dozens of bourgeois parties in the four corners of this globe are plotting for political power every day, and Mansoor Hekmat's party could have been one of them. But this political charlatan claimed that the only way to seize political power for the working class is to gain power through his party, writing:

“The first point I want to say that might seem blasphemous is that this party has an eye for political power and wants to take power. This not only does not contradict [the concept of] seizing power by the working class, but this is essentially the only way for the working class to take political power, that is, to take power through its party. Indeed the fact that taking power by the party might not result in taking power by the class depends on the characteristics of the party.”[6]

As we have seen, Lenin insisted that, as long as we were in the minority, we were criticizing and explaining the mistakes of the workers' councils, while at the same time promoting the necessity of transferring all power to the workers' councils. But Mansoor Hekmat claimed that a workers' party, despite being a minority, can gain political power and become a majority. He was acquainted with the political power gained by the bourgeois parties and the formation of a minority state, usually with the relative support of other bourgeois parties, and sought to gain power in this way. He described the mechanism of his party's acquisition of political power thus:

“A worker party, despite being a minority among the workers, can shape the movement of the majority of workers, rise up, seize power and keep it; after all it is this way that [the party] can become the majority...A worker party which has a minority, a real force among the class; a worker party which has a real and significant force among the class which gives it the possibility of a revolutionary and radical action in society, can attract the rest of the class through this radical and revolutionary action. The mechanism for getting close to political power by the party in relation to the working class is this... Does taking power depend on the degree of our influence among the working class, that is, any time we reach a certain level, if we wish we can take power? My answer is: No... The Worker-communist Party will be able to take power, if it has a significant part of the working class, a minority, but an influential, powerful and active minority on its side... Otherwise it cannot gain political power... we have to move from margin of politics to the... centre of society. We must be one of the few main actors in dividing the share of power and the political situation in the society... Even if we

cannot take the whole power, we must be a force in the bourgeois society that is taken into account and seen as “a source of danger.”[7]

Mansoor Hekmat knew that, if his own party gained political power, this would raise many questions in the political arena, so he would explain in advance whether anyone had any questions about the coming to power of the Worker Communist Party, referring to the French Revolution or dozens of other revolutions. Let’s first see how he explained the process of gaining power:

“We take power on the shoulders of the people and through the people. Whoever then asks about the process of the coming to power of the Worker Communist Party, we refer them to the French Revolution or dozens of other revolutions. Revolutionary governments usually came to power through revolution. For example, the Cuban Revolution. That shouldn’t be a concern. What you and I have to ask is, what does this government want? What is it doing and who does it represent in that society?” [8] [Our translation]

First, Mansoor Hekmat wanted to gain political power on the shoulders of the people and through the people, and not through the working class. The people are not equal to the working class. Secondly, the French Revolution of 1789 was a bourgeois revolution; although an important and progressive historical movement, it was not a proletarian revolution. The key question is, why didn’t Mansoor Hekmat refer to the Paris Commune? The Paris Commune was also formed in France, incidentally after Mansoor Hekmat’s favourite revolution. How did the Communards gain political power? Third, even Mansoor Hekmat could not drag the concept of revolution into the slime when he stated that “revolutionary states usually came to power through revolution”.For example, the Cuban Revolution.” Which revolution happened in Cuba? Was or is the Cuban government a revolutionary state? For Mansoor Hekmat, his victory, namely, the possibility of his party gaining political power, was certain. He even set a time when he would gain political power: one to two years after his speech in October 2000. As he said to his apostles:

“Comrades! We are in one of the most decisive moments in the history of Iranian society ... For the first time, the Worker Communist Party is one step away from victory. I think we have to go forward and witness this victory and not think about the past. And I think we should go for this victory. Go for power. Let’s go, and we can ... Please, everyone who wants to be a carpenter, to be a builder, to write a poem, to write a book, let this happen in another two years, if we fail. The Worker Communist Party must now go to the heart of Iranian society as a compact political force. It has to change it. I think it has to do it and we can do it ... we have to set a day when we can secure power. And that day for the Worker Communist Party is one of those days that could happen in a year, a year and a half, or the next two years.” [9] [Our translation]

Of course, one year before his speech before his disciples, Mansoor Hekmat, in his interview with a journalist, had even been willing to bet on a year and a half for the fall of the Islamic Republic, saying:

“Let’s bet on a year and a half. Who knows? The Islamic Republic may disappear even faster.” [10] [Our translation]

The bourgeoisie and the Western media preferred Khatami to the Khamenei faction, trying to bring him before Western societies; even the Pope met with him. The Worker Communist Party assessed this as the opposition of Western reactionary forces to the rise of a radical socialist regime and wrote in its own organ:

“The fact is that the Islamic Republic has fallen down to a hole, and the spectre of the people’s revolution and the rise of a radical socialist regime in Iran against Western reactionary forces have frightened everyone from the governments of Italy and France to the Pope and the BBC and CNN and so on.” [11] [Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat thought that the people would order the destruction of the Islamic Republic in the year 2000, then he hoped to see it fall in 2001. For the New Year, he sent a congratulatory message to the Iranian people which said:

“In the past year, the people of Iran have publicly demanded the Islamic Republic’s overthrow; the leaders of this reactionary and inhuman regime have realised that their days are numbered. The past year has been a year of awakening and hope for us, and a year of fear for them. A strong people’s movement has begun, which aims to end this twenty three year old nightmare. Hoping that this is the regime’s last year, that we will overthrow Islamic reaction and capitalism in Iran, and that we will celebrate the establishment of a free, equal and humane society in the next new year.”[12]

Hekmat believed that the monarchists represented a bourgeois tendency that was pro-Western and that the West had also opened an account for this part of the bourgeoisie. To gain political power, these political forces must be managed, and this requires dialogue with such currents. It was in this context that the Constitutionalist Party of Iran and Reza Pahlavi (the former Crown Prince) were invited to attend to the Third Congress of the Worker Communist Party, about which Mansoor Hekmat said:

“Look, even the monarchists have sent a tribune to the Worker Communist Party to talk; they are now trying to make the differences between us and their opinions less important. They think that the Worker Communist Party is modern. These will push the Islamists back; we are going to take power with the US.” [13] [Our translation]

For the political power of Mansoor Hekmat, the monarchists were important because they had a social base within the country and a large cultural superstructure from the pre-revolutionary period. Mansoor Hekmat said:

“A small but real minority in society is for them. That is, they have a social base within the country and a layer of the Iranian bourgeoisie stands with them. Is active with them and

knows them as his own government. They have a vast cultural superstructure from the pre-revolution era with them.” [14] [Our translation]

If the monarchists had a social base in the country, why were they dumped into the rubbish bin of history some 40 years ago? That the Islamic bourgeoisie has committed so much crime, of such barbarism, that some despair, alas of the Aryamari era, is a sign of the backwardness of human society. Nationalists and ethnic groups can also arouse strong nationalist sentiments and sometimes even bring large numbers of people with them. Hitler was also supported by a large number of people in the wake of the defeat of the German Revolution and the subsequent desperation of society that followed it. It was important for Mansoor Hekmat to gain political power, even for him to stand by the most reactionary reactionaries. We continue our search for how to gain political power from Mansoor Hekmat’s perspective.

Mansoor Hekmat at the Third Congress of the Worker Communist Party stated that, when he said that he would gain political power with the support of three million people, neither the monarchists nor the US had any objections, only the leftists. In his speech to congress, he told his supporters that he was now determined to lower the percentage and gain political power with one million people, in other words, about 1.5% of Iran’s population at that time. Mansoor Hekmat stated:

“When I told a newspaper in Germany two years ago that, with 5% of the population, which is three million people, we are taking power, the monarchists did not say it is impossible, the US did not say it is impossible, it was the left who said no: ‘with three million people you want to seize power?!’ I now want to bring this number down [laughter and applause from the audience]. I think two million, one million is possible to gain power. Why not? It has to be done.” [15] [Our translation]

Following the formation of the Iranian Communist Party, with its radical propaganda, it was able to gain at least a hearing in society. But, in the process of the continuing disillusionment of the Iranian Communist Party, as well as silence in some circles and the tendency of domestic activists, the willingness from inside of Iran to support the party was virtually meaningless, and communications with the party also reached a new low. This was a fundamental dilemma for the newly established Iranian Worker Communist Party. Mansoor Hekmat, years later, explained this problem concerning worker communism:

“This is the party that was involved in Sanandaj May 1st [activities]; had contacts with different worker circles who listened to our radio, who copied and distributed radio programmes, who travelled abroad [to meet up with us]. But, now, we ask ourselves, and others ask us, what happened to the influence we had [among the working class]? It is interesting that we gained that influence during and after the bloody repression of June 1981. We enjoyed a worker’s base and fabric; but we don’t have it now. What happened to these workers? It’s obvious; they lost interest.”[16]

The lack of labour influence in the country is also mentioned in a report to the Second Congress of the Iranian Communist Party, in which Koorosh Modaressi, Secretary of the Iranian Worker Communist Party's Internal Committee during its formation, endorsed Hekmat's statements as follows:

“The internal committee is composed of a one-and-a-half year plan of action, codified and approved by the political office. This committee created, following a relatively complete recession in organized activities within the country, since the establishment of the party.” [17] [Our translation]

On the one hand, with the complete stagnation of domestic activity in the country and, on the other hand, with the defeat of state capitalism in the Eastern bloc, the model of state capitalism, even with a socialist description, was less attractive in terms of recruiting forces around the party in Iran. The dilemma of recruiting for the purpose of political power has become increasingly important. Given the ideological superstructure of the Islamic bourgeoisie and the oppression that the Islamic Republic imposes in relation to even the most insignificant issues of the people, modernism, secularism, civil rights and so on, recruitment has become easier. Hekmat insisted there is no disdain in recruiting power based on secularism, modernism etc. Love of power is not enough, however. As Hekmat said:

”Never mind if the official, legal press in Iran does not look upon us favourably. 60% of the people in that country are anti-religious and anti-god, who have reached the end of their tethers under the Islamic regime, and all of who are our potential supporters. Whoever has had enough of Islam, has us; whoever has had enough of women's inequality, has us; whoever has had enough of this regime's and its opposition's 'orientalism', has us. And it is our right that they should have us. By regarding us as their representatives, these classes have not distorted our working-class and communist identity. There are people who say 'we are with you because you say what the youth feel and what women feel; because you speak of a more modern culture; or because you are standing up to religion'. There is nothing wrong with that... To have these people around us is not demeaning.”[18]

Of course, Hekmat elsewhere explained what he meant by the process of overthrowing the Islamic Republic and gaining political power. This overthrow could be the result of a US military strike such as the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Saddam in Iraq and other manifestations of chaos. Hekmat wrote:

“The overthrow can be the result of a military process [US military strike], crisis and chaos, civil disobedience and electoral interactions, and so on. It can be the victory of forces other than or in addition to revolutionary forces.” [19] [Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat in his speech told his followers that, in order to become a major player on the social scene, you have to deal with large numbers. Emphasizing that media propaganda, increased newspaper circulation levels or other necessary tools is important to engineer public opinion, he said:

“You have to go to the context of society, where one deals with large numbers. Its publications sell in the several hundred thousands and its demonstrations attract several tens of thousands. In order to be the source of change, one has to go into the middle of society in real politics. This is where the main actors are on the social scene and the job is won by the player who can say that, if it is up to me, I will implement my programme. Staying on the sidelines was an essential feature of the radical left in my opinion. Just look at any country.” [20] [Our translation]

Apparently, in that crowd, everyone was melting under the bright image of the leader, like the image of Christ; they even regarded his words as the words of Christ. Did it not come to the mind of any of the apostles of Mansoor Hekmat that the population of Iran in 1980 was about 37 million, less than half it is now. On 12 June 1980, about 150,000 people participated in the Mujahidin’s meeting, and the circulation of the Mujahidin’s magazine in the spring of 1980 was about 600,000 copies per day - yes, per day! None of the official or government publications enjoyed such a circulation, and the Mujahidin demanded their participation in political power from the outset. Why did the Mujahidin fail to become a major player on the social scene and ultimately became a religious sect in line with US foreign policy and Arab governments?

Mansoor Hekmat was trying to attract international solidarity and public opinion to the political power he wanted to gain in the future. He did not believe in workers’ and socialist movements and stated that they were not in a position to even earn their wages. But, for him, they could rely on Iranian people abroad and occupy the Iranian space outside Iran:

“The second point, in my view, should be the fact that we have to define Iranian society from now on in two areas. We have to assume that the Iranian people live in two different geographical areas. Some inside Iran and some outside. And we have to win both domains ... As a result, the movement that wants to win in Iran must now be present in the Iranian atmosphere outside Iran. The next thing is international solidarity and public opinion. Working with labour movements, working with socialist movements and working with public opinion. They want force. And so, I relied on that first force. Workers’ and socialist movements do not have much of a voice. They are good at releasing a prisoner and so on, but they are not in a position to even earn their living. The reality is, in the Western world, the labour movement is in a mess. And I think we’re talking about the next one or two years. The notion that the Western labour movement will come in and defend such a state is not very logical.” [21] [Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat believed that, once the political power is in place, the new government should promote flexible diplomacy and should not pursue a policy of hostility to the West and the countries of the region.

“Another point is that, in my opinion, people see themselves in the government ... Such a government should have an extremely flexible and wise diplomacy. In my opinion, the intention of war and the issuance of such things should never be left to any place. Must give

assurance that we do not fight with anyone. Are you fascist? Bravo, good for you! We want to do another thing here. I do not think that we should invite any controversy. There should never be hostility towards the West and the countries of the region. The solution is that you have a flexible diplomacy... As a result, the key is that the victorious communism, it must be idolatry. Wang will coexist with the world of his time. At least 10 years.” [22] [Our translation]

In their dream world, activists of worker communism had taken up desired posts and titles in the state that was supposed to be soon realized. One wanted to be president, another minister, and yet other the head of revolutionary radio and television. Maryam Namazi, a member of the politburo of the Communist Party, in a 2003 interview, responded to the questions of the interviewer Mustafa Saber, who was also a member of the politburo, as below:

“Mustafa Saber asks: ‘Where do you see yourself in the next five years? What plans and schemes do you have for the future? What do you think your energy and effort should be focused on?’

Maryam Namazi replies: ‘For the next five years I see myself as the representative of the socialist republic in international assemblies or maybe the minister of a part of the government.’” [23] [Our translation]

Years later, however, Ms Namazi not only failed to become a representative of the socialist republic in international assemblies and a minister, she also resigned from the Worker Communist Party. Koorosh Modaressi also failed to become president as well as overall leadership, and chose the corner of the solitude instead.

Worker communism and the ideology of the personalities

One of the fundamental differences between proletarian class consciousness and ideology (any ideology) is that proletarian class consciousness is the product of a collective process, but ideology is the product of individual effort. Ideology emphasizes individualism, whereas, in the revolutionary organization, collective work is emphasized. Ideology is highly appropriate and, in the manifestation of the bourgeois right and left parties, personalities are important, not the result of collective work. In ideology, the character of the elite plays a pivotal role; in class consciousness, the working class raise their consciousness in the process of collective struggle. In ideology, charismatic personality has a special place, while personality is alien to Marxism; indeed, prominent Marxists such as Lenin, Luxemburg and Bordiga strongly opposed the personality cult. As Marx himself wrote in a letter to Wilhelm Blos:

“I ‘bear no ill-will’ (as Heine says) and nor for that matter does Engels. Neither of us cares a straw for popularity. Let me cite one proof of this: such was my aversion to the personality cult that at the time of the International, when plagued by numerous moves - originating from various countries - to accord me public honour, I never allowed one of these to enter the

domain of publicity, nor did I ever reply to them, save with an occasional snub. When Engels and I first joined the secret communist society, we did so only on condition that anything conducive to a superstitious belief in authority be eliminated from the Rules. (Lassalle subsequently operated in the reverse direction.)”[24]

Unlike Marxism, on the left of capital, especially Stalinism and Maoism, the personality cult is particularly important. Again, unlike Marxism, characters have a special place in worker communism and, according to Mansoor Hekmat, worker communism is the party of personalities. The personal identity of the characters is supposed to be the beloved character of the movement, not the movement’s goals and objectives. Hekmat wrote:

”In this sense, Marx's communism, worker-communism, is always a "party of personalities". Dissolving the individual identity of communists in a faceless administrative and military organisation, to the point of converting their names to initials, stripping communists of identity and turning publicity, agitation, slogan and calls into products of secretariats and central administrative bodies of clandestine organisations are not products of our movement. They do not represent our movement.”[25]

It is an undeniable fact that the ruling ideas in society are those of the ruling class, and this rule becomes invalid only in revolutionary conditions. In class society, propaganda plays a central role in engineering public opinion. The better pre-election campaigns are run, the chances of success increase. It is in this context that propaganda becomes as important to worker communism as it does for other bourgeois parties. Propaganda and action become the main condition of the opposition’s mainstream. To be the main opposition is the goal, not the proletarian movement, through organized intervention in the class struggle and the defence of communist goals and programmes. A revolutionary organization cannot gain its influence through the respect for and popularity of individuals, big names or celebrities. This is contrary to proletarian aims. The revolutionary organization gains its influence only through its programme, positions and practical involvement in the class struggle. Hekmat encouraged his disciples to prepare for political power:

”In regards to becoming the active and the most visible part of the opposition, there are many factors to mention: Demonstrations, journals, personalities, activities, meetings, gatherings, strikes, etc...These are the conditions for the party to become a main trend among the opposition. If the party becomes the main opposition force abroad, assigns 60-70 people to work in Iran and the rest [of the party] turn abroad upside down, people will hear about the party, and then we’ll be the active part of the opposition...We need to have posters with the pictures of our candidates for revolutionary councils, town halls, for the leadership of trade unions, etc. This is the time that comrades should prepare their best photos which we can publish, pictures that will be published in papers inside the country. Is it unwise from security point of view? But [we have to take into consideration that] there are new conditions... Our leadership must be accessible to the public. They [the bourgeoisie] post their photos on walls with their “long live... and down with...” slogans; in return, we must post our photos and our “long live... down with...” slogans in many more numbers... These are real people, not

political organisations who behind secret names issue communiqués. Their names are real; you know the person behind the name; you know their behaviour and character. After all, real people must appear in front of the scene.”[26]

In the sociology and social psychology of class societies, as much as a phenomenon, the bigger and larger its splendour, the greater its grandeur. A skyscraper is magnificent because of the number of floors it has; a general is judged by the number of stars on his or her shoulders. For a force that wants political power, the greater its magnificence, the more chance it has of gaining power. It is not the case that a social class reaches a degree of class consciousness in the course of the class struggle, in order to present its alternative to class society and to exercise political power as a social class. The question is, in the class society, will this grandeur and greatness be created by resorting to lies, forgery, propaganda etc. in order to increase the chances of gaining political power? Worker communism belongs to this tradition, and Mansoor Hekmat taught his apostles in congress how personalities resort to lying and falsification, in their pursuit of glory for worker communism. Hekmat said:

“If we are a party that wants to go to the centre, we must look at ourselves as a people, which is critical in the world of politics. Not only when my comrade becomes a leader will I say, wow, but what is this?! I’m better than this! But, if the standard is not high enough, I can tell others, see how high it is? This is my comrade. But what is this?! We are nurturing the future leader of the protest movement in this party among those who sit here and are in this party. The party that is rapidly changing the landscape of political activity is intensifying its cooperative nature and filling each other’s vacancies. The money you collect for this party, well, put two zeros in front of the amount, because it’s two zeros that will allow you to get there. Not one zero, but two zeros. One guy came to give me \$10; you have to say the guy gave me \$1,000. I have recruited three members; you should say, I have recruited 300 members. The dignity of everyone goes up in other people’s mind. Their expectations are extremely high, comrades. Seventy people came to the speech of a comrade, it must be claimed that 7,000 people came to the speech. I’m really saying, if you are going to the centre ... even though the other side is falling to you on this scale and you are in such a fight, either wear your armour or don’t join this war.... This movement, in its own right, may have a liberated region or it may have fallen into power, it may be at war, it may be at peace. It may be a coalition in the cabinet. The expectation that comes from our comrades is that I’m a blatant politician in this country. Each of us must think that he or she is a high-profile political figure in society ... he or she must really be such a figure.” [27] [Our translation]

The growth of the working class is not linear, and this growth is not only different in different parts of the globe, but even within a particular country. Most importantly, the workers and the revolutionaries do not have the same abilities and consequently appear in different forms or at different levels in the struggle. A revolutionary organization is not equal to the algebraic sum of its members but is the product of collective action. In the intellectual system of worker communism and Mansoor Hekmat, it is not the maturity of the class consciousness of a social class, which is capable of governing society, that has reached the surface, but the “political elites” that are competent to govern society and social institutions. The other side of Mansoor

Hekmat's demagoguery is that it is as if the officials of the state or institutions are elected on the basis of genuine competence. Only one case needs to be mentioned here: Trump, a real estate broker who became the president of the world's largest economy and war machine, even given the criteria of bourgeois society and the fact that he had no political background. With humiliation of the working class, Mansoor Hekmat offered posts in ministries, in municipalities and on big projects to the political elites in his own circle, who can now become the personalities in any future scenarios of political power. As Hekmat said:

"Any of you, if you were so minded, in any regime ... could be a minister in that country. How many people do you know here who could have been a mayor if he had gone to that country and said 'I'm not political'? How many of you could be responsible for a hundred large projects? In my opinion, many. We have taken over from the political elites of society." [28] [Our translation]

As mentioned, one of the characteristics of worker communism is to associate with personalities. There is a need for publicity, especially for colourful advertising of these characters. Mansoor Hekmat claimed that, in Iranian society, labour leaders are anonymous, while, in Latin America, they are well known at the municipal and the parliamentary level. But he stated his main purpose behind this anonymity saying that, in Latin America, the left make approaches to the labour unions, their leaders talk to each other and agree that voting for the left will help them to get into power. Atomized workers in the unions and the left are a tool for gaining power. All of this demagogy and political charlatanism are about working with famous, yet anonymous personalities in order for worker communism to gain power. Hekmat preached:

"The other weakness is the relatively underdeveloped labour movement ... If you go to Latin America, you see that the labour leaders are well-known leaders at the city level and lawyers in the parliament. The leaders of such trade unions are prominent people in society ... Latin America has always been this way: the left gets closer to the trade unions, and their leaders talk to each other and encourage their members to vote for the left and help them to get into power. In Iran, workers are single and atomized and therefore unable to organize the structures of trade and the defensive struggle. As a result, a large hole is left behind by the communists. Going forward to make a basic move, you see a class moving in its name, or at least by its name; it does not know what strength it has on the stage." [29] [Our translation]

Ms Leila Danesh, former editor-in-chief of *International*, the organ of the Worker Communist Party, in relation to the party of Mansoor Hekmat, the party that was once its editor-in-chief, says the following about personalities and personality cults:

"Encouraging the Mujahideen leadership and more recently the worship of party, guiding the organization as prophetic, with horns and shoulders directed at every dissenting voice ... A party of characters, who race to print their photos, crushing each other."

A former member of the Central Committee of the Worker Communist Party, with regard to the personality cult in worker communism, and the spirit of leadership, explains how these have affected the practice of worker communism:

“Readers of these texts cannot yet fully comprehend the formation of such relationships. They have not seen how, in the three-day plenum (Vast Plenum of November 1998 with the participation of Central Committee members and 45 cadres), about 70 people were invited, who drank coffee and smoked from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 12 p.m., awaiting the party leadership’s ‘formalization’ in the meeting place, after hours of delay, because of the traffic jams. The traffic jams also explained the problem. Not once, but all of the three days.” [30] [Our translation]

Another former member of the Central Committee of the Worker Communist Party and a Hekmatist, who, for the moment, has chosen a corner to be alone in their retirement, while expressing his platonic love for his fuhrer, describes the new leader of the Worker Communist Party as follows. Of course, his description of this new leader can also be extended to the leader of worker communism, as he says that he is also ashamed that such a leader was once his leader. He writes:

“These word are obviously unfounded. These word says for this reason that the members of the worker communist party of Iran did not find any suspicion and thought. Says for the humans that they are brainwashed and unable to think...I am ashamed that such a person was at one time the leader of the party I was a member of. So far, I do not have any Marxist contender to comment so careless on the issues.” [31] [Our translation]

Worker communism and relations with foreign governments

Unlike previous class systems, capitalism is a global system, and consequently the struggle of the working class demands a global response. The struggle of the working class and the spread of the struggle necessitate a fundamental intervention: class solidarity. Class solidarity, both nationally and internationally, is the cornerstone of proletarian internationalism. In its struggle, the working class can only rely on the support and solidarity of their class sisters and brothers. In other words, the working class and its political organizations can only communicate with other sections of the working class or seek help and solidarity - indeed, the history of the working-class struggle over the last 200 years has been full of such contact, support and solidarity.

Contrary to proletarian solidarity, in the history of the labour and communist movement, there are no theories, and no opinions about the relationship between a workers’ organization and a communist political organization with states. In none of the programmes and statutes of the communist organizations can the term “relationship with the states” be found, but the emphasis has been placed on proletarian internationalism.

Relations with governments are not just applicable to pro-Russian or Chinese currents; under the name of “communist diplomacy”, the radical phrase part of the left of capital are associated with governments, and they try to justify their action by referring to the passage of Lenin’s train from Germany. Worker communism is also one of these trends. Before examining the relationship between worker communism and the states, a brief examination of the issue of how Lenin’s train crossed Germany is necessary. The British and French governments, allied with Russia in the war, prevented the revolutionaries from returning to Russia for fear of the Russian Revolution. Martov (not a Bolshevik but a Menshevik) proposed a plan, in exchange for migrants passing through Germany, where the interim Russian government would release German and Austrian prisoners held in Russia. A number of telegrams was sent to Russia as a result. Since the interim government did not respond to the telegrams, Fritz Platten, a Swiss internationalist, concluded the agreement with the German ambassador to Switzerland, who was in full agreement with other internationalists, and the internationalists from different countries signed the travel protocol[32].

Its main points are:

1. All emigrants, regardless of their opinions on the war, shall be allowed passage.
2. The railway coach in which the emigrants will travel shall have the privileges of extraterritoriality; no one shall have the right to enter the coach without Platten's permission; there shall be no control either of passports or luggage.
3. The travellers agree to agitate in Russia that the emigrants who have been granted passage be exchanged for a corresponding number of Austro-German internees.

Thus, 32 immigrants with different party affiliations, including Lenin, were able to return to Russia. The day after arriving in Russia, Lenin submitted a full report, entitled *How We Arrived*, to the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Council, which was later published in the *Pravda* and *Izvestia* newspapers. With these explanations, we refer to the resolution of the Worker Communist Party, known as the “Principles of Relationships with States”, adopted by Mansoor Hekmat in 1999. The declaration states that:

“Contact and establishment of relations between the Worker Communist Party and governments, whether in the region or elsewhere: if the rules adopted by the Central Committee are strictly adhered to, it is in principle permissible ... At this point relationships with the following governments are not allowed:

- Islamic governments
- Iraqi government” [33]

According to this resolution, except for Islamic governments and Iraq, the Worker Communist Party can have relations with other states. Of course, the Iraqi government was listed because of the formation of the Iraqi Worker Communist Party. The key question is, why does worker communism want to have a relationship with governments? One of the leaders of worker communism says:

“The relationship with Iraq, at a very limited level, was going on with Komala before the Iranian Communist Party was formed. The scope of this relationship after the formation of the Iranian Communist Party went far beyond what we even imagined in that party. Our central organs including the leadership of the Communist Party and its Kurdistan organization, leisure facilities, radio broadcasting facilities, publications [etc.] ... all in Iraq, were financed by the use of facilities we got from Iraq.” [34] [Our translation]

The ideologues of worker communism have always falsely claimed that getting money and possessions was unconditional. Through demagoguery, they claim that the Communist Party did not become an appendage of imperialist tensions. Following the First Gulf War ceasefire, protests erupted throughout Iraq, to which the criminal Saddam responded with a bloodbath and the displacement of millions of people. Not even the only communist party in the world (the Iranian Communist Party) could make a simple statement about the events. Mansoor Hekmat responded thus:

“The reason why the statement was not issued, indeed, the reason for the lack of official reaction from the political bureau to this day, is the fact that this event was a practical burden on the Kurdish organization of the Communist Party.” [35]

What was the practical burden on the Kurdish organization of the Communist Party? The fact is that, the main force of the party, under the guise of Komala, has become part of the imperialist tensions. Many times, the Iraqi state punished Komala by bombing its headquarters and, each time, some of Komala’s partisans died. This meant that, as Komala remained within the sights of Iraqi foreign policy, it could not make the slightest mistake. The most prominent and elite partisans of Komala in the Shawan battalion died in the Iraqi chemical bombing raids. Mansoor Hekmat, in connection with the bombing of Komala’s camps by Iraq, and how 23 of the most militant and elite partisans of Komala were victimized by such a policy, says:

“The camps were gradually transferred to the depths of Iraqi Kurdistan and the Iraqi military control areas. Military transfers were really only allowed with Iraqi permission and the freedom of the organization was restricted to sending troops to Iran ... Maintaining the balance and the policy of non-interference in the ‘internal affairs of Iraq’ became much more difficult. As an example, only to intimidate Komala and separate it from the Iraqi Kurdish opposition, the Iraqi regime bombed our camps on several occasions. In only one case of chemical bombardment of the central camp of Komala, 23 of our most prominent and oldest activists lost their lives.” [36] [Our translation].

We found out, after getting money and facilities from Saddam Hussein, how much came without conditions for the Iranian Communist Party. Wasn’t the death of 23 most prominent activists, through chemical bombing, at one time unconditional? Iraq seems to have given way to other capitalist states. Another leader of worker communism (Mansoor Hekmat’s wife), on the topic of receiving money from different capitalist states which contribute to suppression and killing around the world, explains as below:

“As far as receiving money from various capitalist states that are in one way or another involved in suppression and massacre in the world is concerned, all the major opposition parties and organizations and various social, cultural and art institutions created by the left opposition abroad have received financial support from a state. There are many institutions in different European countries which are in some way related to opposition organizations, and these have been formed with financial support from various states. States that are members of NATO. Moreover, until the fall of Saddam Hussein, main opposition organizations got money from Saddam Hussein's state, and apart from Komala, no one else has publicly announced these financial supports to the people.”[37][Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat responded to rumours that the Iranian Worker Communist Party received money from Israel during a sideline seminar during its Third Congress, saying:

“Even to my mind, the rumour that they are getting money from Israel is in our favour. Let it be said! Israel is not going to help a four-person circle. Certainly, we have seen the benefit in this. Perhaps it is estimated that the Worker Communist Party is a force that can be invested in it. Let them say that. It is clear that we are cursing them because of the intentions and goals they pursue. But this naive lot don't realize that such an image has gone into people's homes and, as a result, people are saying that they can capture and maintain [power], and may even reach a compromise with Israel and the US, so that they can keep themselves in power.” [38] [Our translation]

To Be Continued

Issues in the next part:

- The ideology of Marxism-Hekmatism
- Worker communism and westernism
- Worker communism and the Freedom Guard

M. Jahangiry
22 February 2020

Notes:

- [1] The Program of the Blanquist Fugitives from the Paris Commune
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1874/06/26.htm>
- [2] The April Theses – Lenin
- [3] The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd
- [4] As source 3
- [5] Marxism and resurrection - Lenin
- [6] Party and Political Power
- [7] As source 6
- [8] <http://hekmat.public-archive.net/fa/3920fa.html>
- [9] Mansoor Hekmat - Opening speech at the Third Congress of the Worker Communist Party
- [10] Mansoor Hekmat in an interview with Safa Haeri, February 1999
- [11] Editorial, *International* No. 28, March 1999
- [12] New Year Message to the People of Iran
- [13] Mansoor Hekmat - “Positive and Negative Movements”, side seminar at the Third Party Congress
- [14] Is it Possible to Win Communism in Iran?, Mansoor Hekmat.
- [15] Mansoor Hekmat - Lecture on “Political and Economic Struggle for the Working Class”, Third Congress of the Worker Communist Party
- [16] As source 6
- [17] For further information, see pages 172 and 173 of the book *In This Deadlock* by Reza Moghaddam, one of the former leaders of the Worker Communist Party
- [18] Power Party and Society: From a pressure group to a political party
- [19] Mansoor Hekmat, “Overthrow, Revolution and Socialism”, letter to Hamid Taghvaei and Fateh Sheikh, 17 July 1999
- [20] Speech at the opening session of the Second Congress of the Iranian Worker Communist Party
- [21] As source 14
- [22] As source 14
- [23] *Communist Youth* No. 19, February 2003
- [24] https://marxists.catbull.com/archive/marx/works/1877/letters/77_11_10.htm
- [25] Power Party and Society: From a pressure group to a political party
- [26] Party and Political Power
- [27] As source 14
- [28] As source 14
- [29] As source 14
- [33] Principles of the relationship with governments - approved by the Communist Party, June 1999
- [31] The Populism of Hamid Taqvaei and the Overthrowing Charter of the Worker-communist
- [32] <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/apr/04b.htm>
- [33] Principles of relationship with governments - From the communist party's approvals of June 1999

[34]http://www.iran-tribune.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=52789:2014-08-07-02-47-30&Itemid=649

[35] The Consequences of the Middle East War - The Events in Iraqi Kurdistan - Interview with Communist No. 61

[36] Mansoor Hekmat - “diplomacy” or political choice?

[37] AzarMajedi (widow of MansoorHekmat) – International tribunal to handle the crimes of Islamic can be support or condemnation?

[38] As source 13